Catalogue no. 91F0015M — No. 11
ISSN 1205-996X
ISBN 978-1-100-23431-1

Research Paper

Demographic Documents

Enduring diversity: Living arrangements of children in Canada over 100 years of the census

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April 2014

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..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0^s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
^{p}	preliminary
^{r}	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
^{E}	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published
*	significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Note to readers

An overview article which highlights selected findings from this article is available in *Insights on Canadian Society* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-006-X). The study can be accessed from the "Publications" module of the Statistics Canada website, under the "Browse by key resource" tab.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge several persons who also participated in this report, whether by providing advice and suggestions, preparing products or arranging for dissemination: Laurent Martel, Yvan Clermont, Danielle Gauvreau, Carol D'Aoust, Sébastien Larochelle-Côté, Jean-Dominique Morency, Patrice Dion, Julien Bérard-Chagnon and Éric Caron Malenfant.

Enduring diversity: Living arrangements of children in Canada over 100 years of the census

by

Nora Bohnert, Anne Milan and Heather Lathe

Introduction

Canada, like many other industrialized countries, has experienced many social, economic, legislative and cultural changes over the past century. These changes have affected many aspects of everyday life, including family circumstances and living arrangements. While always influenced by the broader social context of various historical periods, the living arrangements of children over the last 100 years have been characterized by diversity and fluidity.

The Canadian census of population has long been used to examine the living arrangements of children. As society has evolved so too have the concepts, definitions and indicators related to children that are used in the census (see Appendix for details including historical comparability).[1] As a result, the census provides both an extensive time series and a unique lens to examine the family arrangements and circumstances of children in Canada over time.

This article examines the family structure and living arrangements of children in Canada using census data from 1901 to 2011. Specifically, four eras reflecting major shifts in family living arrangements are considered: the early 20th century, the baby boom, the late 20th century, and the current millennium to date. Among the topics examined are the particular family structures of children over time, including two-parent families of different configurations, female and male lone-parent families and the number of children in families. Other aspects of children's lives are also explored when relevant in a given time period (for example, mortality, education and labour force participation in the early 20th century). In addition to providing a time series of children's living arrangements in Canada over the past century, this article extensively documents the historical comparability of child and family-related census concepts.

Examining children's past and current living arrangements helps shed light on how their family circumstances are affected by the societal conditions of a particular era and how they might continue to evolve in the future. Additionally, it will be shown that some issues frequently considered as modern phenomena have actually been present and of interest for many decades. Finally, understanding the evolution of diversity in children's living arrangements provides a broadened context for program and policy development related to today's children and families.

1. Unless otherwise indicated, children will be considered age 24 and under in census families in private households.

The first half of the 20th century

1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011

Over the first half of the 20th century, Canada's social landscape changed dramatically. Increased urbanization and industrialization, medical and sanitary innovations, the Great Depression and two world wars were among the factors that influenced the everyday lives of children in Canadian families.

At the turn of the 20th century, Canada was in the midst of a demographic transition from an era of relatively high mortality and fertility to one of improved population health, life expectancy and increased fertility control and limitation. At the same time, Canada became a major receiver of international immigrants, affecting the regional and ethnic distribution of the population.[2] Glimpses from early censuses show that, at this time of great transition, many children in Canada had a very different experience of childhood compared to today.

The census has only recently begun to distinguish certain diverse family forms such as stepfamilies, skip-generation families and multigenerational households. However, children's living arrangements have always varied to some degree. At the turn of the 20th century, census families (a couple, with or without children, or a lone parent with one or more children) were much more open to admitting people other than immediate family members into their homes, either for additional income or to give or receive care or financial support. Within this "culture of household sharing",[3] it is estimated that about one in three (30.8%[4]) census-family households in 1901 contained additional persons (non-census family persons and/or other census families) compared to 9.2% in 2011.[5] Most of these additional household members in 1901 were other relatives, lodgers, boarders or employees of the family head.[6] A wide variety of extended relatives, such as "stepdaughter-in-law", "half sister", "great nephew" and "goddaughter" were among the household relationships recorded by 1901 Census enumerators.[7] These diverse family living arrangements were in many cases a result of the death of one or more family members.

Death within the family—of siblings, of mothers during or following complications from childbirth, of fathers serving in war, for example—was a much more common experience for young children in the early 20th century than today. In 1921, about 1 in 11 (8.9%) children aged 15 and under had experienced the death of at least one parent, while 4.1% had experienced the death of both parents.[8, 9] In addition, children themselves experienced a much higher risk of death a century ago compared to today (Box 1).

In the early 20th century, the death of one or both parents often resulted in children living with relatives or non-relatives. Parents could also send their children to live elsewhere to attend school (Box 2), become an apprentice, earn wages (Box 3), or simply reduce the economic burden on families experiencing financial difficulties.[10] It is estimated that approximately 55,000 children aged 14 and under had a non-parental guardian in 1901,[11] representing 3.0% of the total population in that age group. In comparison, there were 29,600 foster children aged 14 and under reported in the 2011 Census, representing 0.5% of this population.[12]

2. McInnis, M. 2000. "Canada's Population in the 20th Century", *A Population History of North America*, editors M.R. Haines and R.H. Steckel, Cambridge University Press, pages 371 to 432.
3. Burke, S.D.A. 2007. "Transitions in household and family structure: Canada in 1901 and 1991", *Household Counts: Canadian Households and Families in 1901*, editors E.W. Sager and P. Baskerville, University of Toronto Press, page 32.
4. Calculated from Burke (2007), Tables 1.1 and 1.2.
5. 2011 Census of Population.
6. In the 1971 and the previous censuses of population, in a husband-wife family, the husband if present was automatically designated the family head. In a lone-parent family, the male or female parent was always the family head. In the 1976 Census, the term 'family head' was eliminated. Source: Wargon, S.T. 1979. *Children in Canadian Families*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-810.
7. The Canadian Families Project. 2002. *The National Sample of the 1901 Census of Canada: User's Guide*. The Canadian Families Project created a computerized national sample of individual-level information from the 1901 Census of Canada. The database contains a 5% random sample of dwellings, stratified by microfilm reel.
8. 1921 Census of Canada, volume III, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-1921, Table 31.
9. In comparison, in 2011, less than 1% of children aged 0 to 14 lived in a lone-parent family in which the parent was widowed.
10. Darroch, G. 2001. "Home and away: Patterns of residence, schooling and work among children and never married young adults, Canada, 1871 and 1901", *Journal of Family History*, volume 26, pages 220 to 250.
11. Darroch, G. 2007. "Families, Fostering and Flying the Coop: Lessons in Liberal Cultural Formation, 1871-1901", *Household Counts: Canadian Households and Families in 1901*, editors E.W. Sager and P. Baskerville, University of Toronto Press, pages 197 to 246.
12. Milan, A. and N. Bohnert. 2012. *Portrait of Families and Living Arrangements in Canada*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-312-X-2011001.

Box 1

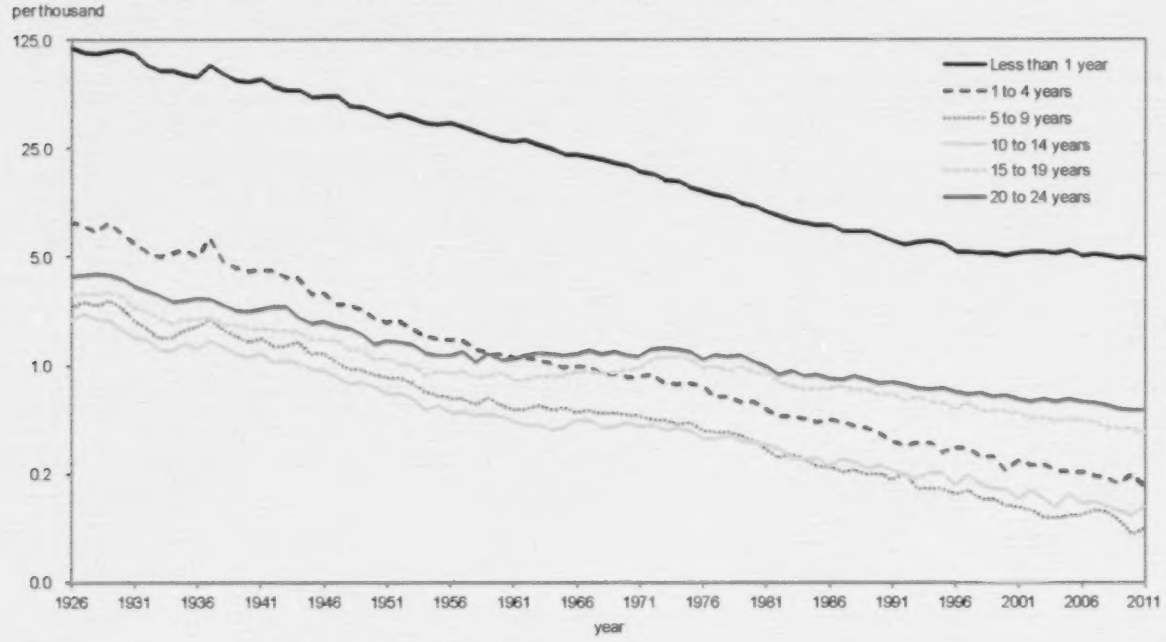
The reduction in infant and child mortality rates over the last century

In the early 1900s, socioeconomic status played a less clear role in mortality than today. This was particularly true in urban areas where industrialization contributed to poor environmental and sanitary conditions and the spread of infectious disease. As a result, children raised in rural areas, particularly on large farms, experienced a lower risk of mortality than those in urban areas.[1]

The reduction in child mortality over the 20th century came along with a broader epidemiological transition that began in the 19th century. This transition was characterized by a shift in disease patterns from high mortality at all ages mostly due to communicable disease to lower mortality mostly concentrated at older ages and mainly as a result of degenerative diseases.[2]

By 2011, the infant mortality rate in Canada had declined to less than 5% of its 1926 level. The largest declines in childhood mortality have occurred for children aged 1 to 4, from 8.4 deaths per thousand in 1926 to 0.2 deaths per thousand in 2011 (see Figure B1), a reduction of 98%.

Figure B1
Number of deaths per thousand population, selected age groups, Canada, 1926 to 2011



Note(s): The Y-axis is a logarithmic scale with a base of 5.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics, Death Database, 1926 to 2011, Survey 3233 and Demography Division, Population Estimates Program.

1. Gagnon, A. and N. Bohnert. 2012. "Early life socioeconomic conditions in rural areas and old-age mortality in twentieth-century Quebec", *Social Science and Medicine*, volume 75, pages 1,597 to 1,604.
2. Beaujot, R. and D. Kerr. 2004. *Population Change in Canada*, Oxford University Press.

Box 2

Diversity in the educational experiences of children in 1921

In the late-19th century, interest in public, non-denominational schooling began to grow in many parts of Canada. As affordable farmland became scarcer, public schooling represented an opportunity for children from large farming families to learn other skills and possibly increase their chances of economic security in adulthood.[1]

Beginning with Ontario in 1871, the provinces and territories began introducing compulsory school laws, including minimum age requirements for a child to remain at school. School attendance and literacy were far from universal among children at that time and were linked to parental background and place of residence.[2] Yet children increasingly followed different educational paths than those of their parents at this time of transition towards universal education.

The 1921 Census reported that, in that year, 74.7% of children aged 7 to 14 who had illiterate parents were literate themselves.[3] In comparison, 92% of children with literate parents were themselves literate. Additionally, children living in rural areas were slightly less likely to attend school (88.4%) than children living in urban areas (95.1%).[4]

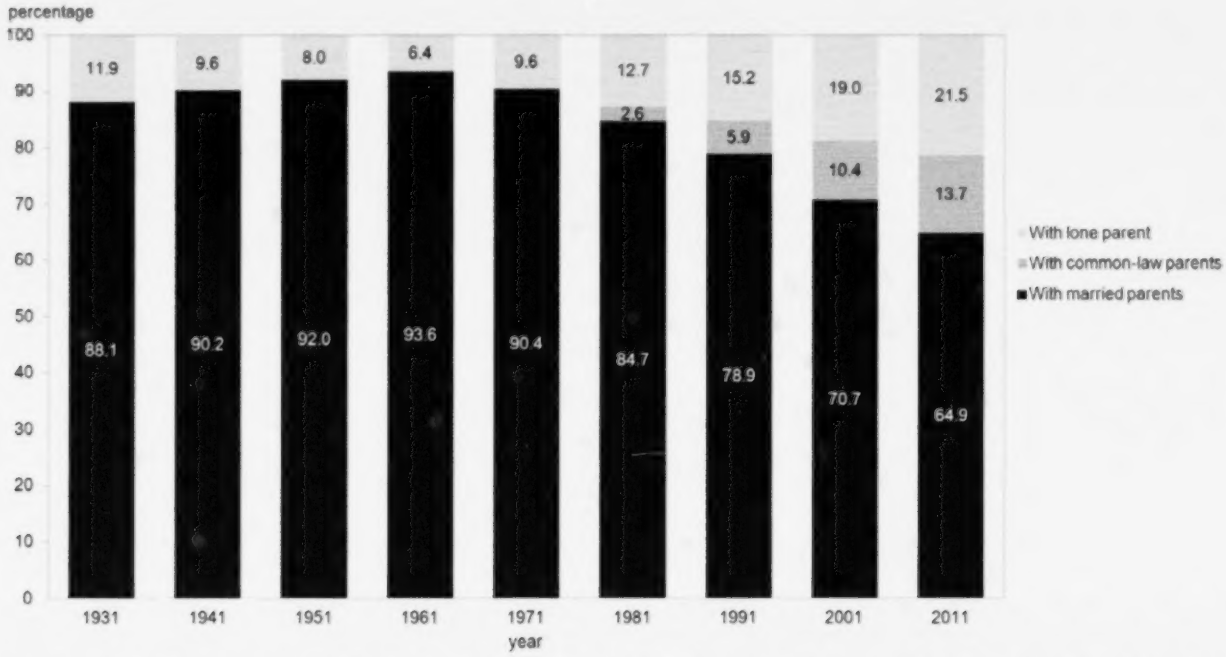
1. Oreopolous, P. 2006. *Canadian compulsory school laws and their impact on educational attainment and future earnings.* Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11F0019MIE, no. 251.
2. Gossage, P. and D. Gauvreau. 2007. "Canadian Fertility in 1901: A Bird's Eye View", *Household Counts: Canadian Households and Families in 1901,* editors E.W. Sager and P. Baskerville, University of Toronto Press, pages 59 to 109.
3. The definitions of literacy and illiteracy are not precisely documented in the 1921 publication, The 1901 Census questionnaire, published by the Canadian Families Project, provided census enumerators with check boxes for the categories "can read" and "can write", which presumably could be used to categorize the literacy of individuals.
4. 1921 Census of Canada, volume III, Table 40, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-1921.

This living arrangement continued to exist during the difficult times of the Great Depression, as evidenced by a 1931 Census monograph that analyzed 'guardianship children', defined as "persons other than own children" of the household head.[13] Guardianship of this nature was more widespread than institutional care at that time, with guardianship children living in private homes outnumbering children in institutions 4.3 to 1 in 1931.[14] Most guardianship children lived with a member of their immediate or extended family: approximately one-third (34.4%) lived with a grandparent, 28.5% lived with an uncle or aunt and 8.2% lived with a brother or sister.[15]

Despite the prevalence of guardianship families during that era, many children remained with one parent in a lone-parent family. It is estimated that over 100,000 children aged 14 and under were living in a household with only one parent present in 1901, among which just over 60% lived with a lone mother.[16,17] Indeed, the proportion of children who lived with a lone parent was nearly as high in 1931 (11.9%) as it was in 1981 (12.7%), as seen in Figure 1. Lone-parent families in the early 20th century were found across the socioeconomic strata of the country, and thus the experiences of children raised in such families were quite diverse. Remarriage also occurred, however, and thus many children experienced several different family structures over the course of their childhood. As with every census snapshot, an even higher share of children may have experienced transitions between two-parent families and lone-parent families than what has been captured by the census data.

13. Pelletier, A.J., F.D. Thompson and A. Rochon. 1938. *The Canadian Family,* 1931 Census, monograph no. 7, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-1931CM-7.
14. Pelletier et al. 1938, page 94.
15. The remaining 28.9% lived with an adoptive guardian or other person. Source: Pelletier et al. 1938, Table LXVII.
16. Bradbury, B. 2007. "Canadian Children Who Lived with One Parent in 1901", *Household Counts: Canadian Households and Families in 1901,* editors E.W. Sager and P. Baskerville, University of Toronto Press, pages 247 to 301.
17. Bradbury notes that due to the difficulties in raising a child, many male parents, upon the loss of their spouse, would have given their children to relatives or for adoption. Thus, the children of surviving fathers were more likely to appear in the census data as living in households in which they had no parent present.

Figure 1
Distribution (in percentage) of the living arrangements of children aged 24 and under in census families, Canada, 1931 to 2011



Note(s): Data on common-law couple families are not available prior to 1981. Historical comparisons for children living in census families, particularly in lone-parent families, must be interpreted with caution due to conceptual changes over time. For more information, see Appendix.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1931 to 2011.

Throughout the early 20th century, families continued to be relatively large owing to the influence of religion on family life, combined with less effective means of contraception as well as the value of children in what was still a largely rural environment: it was not until 1931 that the proportion of the population living in urban areas surpassed the population living in rural areas in Canada.[18] From an estimated 6.56 children per woman in 1851,[19] the total fertility rate decreased to 3.48[20] children per woman in 1931; still well above the population replacement level at that time of 2.40 children per woman[21] but lower than for previous generations of women. Several changes may have played a role in this decrease, such as the difficult economic circumstances of this era, the uncertainties due to war, the transition to greater urbanization in conjunction with evolving modes of production and farming methods, the growing dependency of households on wages for their sustenance, changing attitudes of women and the growing cost of childrearing. A 1938 manuscript based on 1931 Census data addressed some of the reasons for the fertility decline as follows:

> "The early Canadian settlers were great individualists...In this society large families were common and children were generally regarded as an asset and a blessing...During the last seventy years, production has been centralized and activity of the individual producers has been narrowed to a specific job. Consequently, the family has become much less self-sufficient."[22]

18. Martel, L. and J. Chagnon. 2013. "Canada's rural population since 1851", *Census in Brief*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-310-X-2011003, Figure 1.
19. Gee, E.M. 1987. "Historical Change in the Family Life Course of Canadian Men and Women", *Aging in Canada: Social Perspectives, editor* V.W. Marshall, Fitzhenry and Whiteside, Table 4.
20. Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics, Births Database, 1926 to 2011, Survey 3231 and Demography Division, Population Estimates Program.
21. The cohort replacement rate varies over time as a function of the mean age of childbearing and female mortality rates. The 1931 replacement rate of 2.40 children per woman is calculated as $1 / (r * m)$ where r equals the female-to-male sex ratio at birth (0.488) and m equals the probability of survival of females from birth to the mean age of childbearing, which was approximately age 30 in 1931 (0.8536).
22. Pelletier et al. 1938, page 193.

Box 3

Children as contributors to family income

> "It is obvious that the gainfully occupied children bear a considerable share of the burden of supporting their families.[1]"

The 1901 Census offers a glimpse of the labour force participation of older children at the time. Families, sometimes a result of economic pressures but also for other reasons, often sent their teenage children into the paid workforce. Census enumerators described a hierarchy of occupation in which 'boy' and 'girl' helpers were at the bottom in terms of both age and earnings; especially teenage girls.[2] Some of these children resided in their employer's home: among the responses to the question, "relationship to head" in the 1901 Census were "servant girl", "hired boy" and "domestic chore girl".[3]

Along with the introduction of compulsory schooling laws for children, Canada's provinces began implementing child labour legislation at the beginning of the 20th century. Legislation included restrictions on the age at which a child could begin to work in certain industries, as well as the number of hours and what times of day children could work.

At the depth of the Great Depression, 1931 Census results show that children's earnings were important to the economic security of many families. Children aged 15 and over in families earned 11.8% of all family earnings, and 8.6% of the total earnings of all wage earners.[4] The relative contributions of children towards family income varied greatly according to the socioeconomic position of the family head. For instance, among families in which the family head had low earnings, children contributed earnings that were on average 40.4% of those of the family head. In comparison, this proportion was 1.0% among the children of family heads in the highest earnings category.[5]

1. Pelletier, A.J., F.D. Thompson and A. Rochon. 1938. *The Canadian Family*, 1931 Census, monograph no. 7, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-1931CM-7, page 118.
2. Sager, E.W. 2007. "Inequality, Earnings and the Canadian Working Class in 1901", *Household Counts: Canadian Households and Families in 1901, editors* E.W. Sager and P. Baskerville, University of Toronto Press, pages 339 to 370.
3. The Canadian Families Project. 2002. *The National Sample of the 1901 Census of Canada: User's Guide*.
4. Pelletier et al. 1938, Table LXXXIX.
5. Pelletier et al. 1938, Table XCV.

> "As life becomes more comfortable...an increasing emphasis is placed on the sacrifices which women must make to bear children. Regardless of other factors, an improvement in living conditions for the human race per se makes women more reluctant to undergo the travail and inconvenience of bearing child after child."[23]

The same manuscript included a series of policy recommendations to reverse these growing tendencies and stimulate the birth rate. Among them were the implementations of unemployment insurance and family allowances—both relatively novel propositions at that time. The growing role of immigration in population growth was not anticipated, as it was remarked that "[i]f the present downward trend in natural increase of population continues, there is a real possibility that actual stability or retrogression [of the population] will be reached.[24]"

23. Pelletier et al. 1938, page 195.
24. Pelletier et al. 1938, page 195.

The baby boom

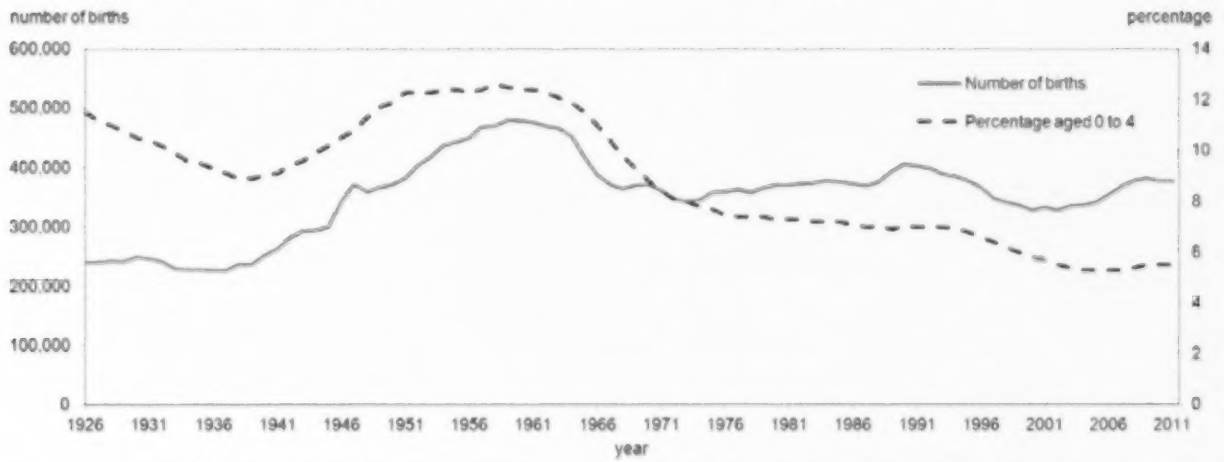
1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011

The years immediately following the Second World War were characterized by an economic boom and much technological and infrastructural development in Canada. Additionally, men and women began marrying at a greater rate and at a younger age, and women began having children at a younger age, on average, than previous cohorts. These changes contributed to the baby boom (1946 to 1965) which defines this period in the nation's history.[25] These years also saw the widespread introduction of television into homes, transforming family leisure habits and popular culture. Television programs such as 'Leave it to Beaver' transmitted an idealized portrayal of a nuclear family which influenced societal norms about family life. The 'male breadwinner' model was the predominant family form, with a prevailing norm that mothers should engage primarily in the unpaid work of homemaking and childrearing.[26]

As a result of these cultural shifts and further reductions in child and adult mortality, many children born during the middle of the 20th century in Canada experienced a relatively stable[27] family situation over the course of their childhood, a stability not seen in the eras immediately preceding and following. In 1961, 93.6% of the 7.8 million children in census families were living with married parents—the highest proportion observed over the past century.[28] Correspondingly, the proportion of children living with a lone parent reached a low of 6.4% in 1961, just over half the 11.9% share observed thirty years earlier in 1931.

Owing mainly to changes in the timing of childbearing among consecutive cohorts of women, fertility increased to its highest recorded level during this era, peaking at 3.94 children per woman in 1959.[29] The number of births during the baby-boom years was also the largest ever recorded. About 479,300 births were registered in 1959, almost double the 242,100 recorded thirty years earlier in 1929. Thus, the baby boom was a period when the absolute number and the relative prevalence of children aged 4 and under were both at elevated levels not seen before or since (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Number of births and proportion (in percentage) of the population aged 0 to 4, Canada, 1926 to 2011



Source(s): Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics, Births Database, 1926 to 2011, Survey 3231 and Demography Division, Population Estimates Program.

25. Milan, A. 2000. "One hundred years of families", *Canadian Social Trends*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-008.

26. Beaujot, R. and A. Muhammad. 2006. "Transformed families and the basis for childbearing", *Canada's Changing Families: Implications for Individuals and Society*, editors K. McQuillan and Z.R. Ravanera, University of Toronto Press, pages 15 to 48.

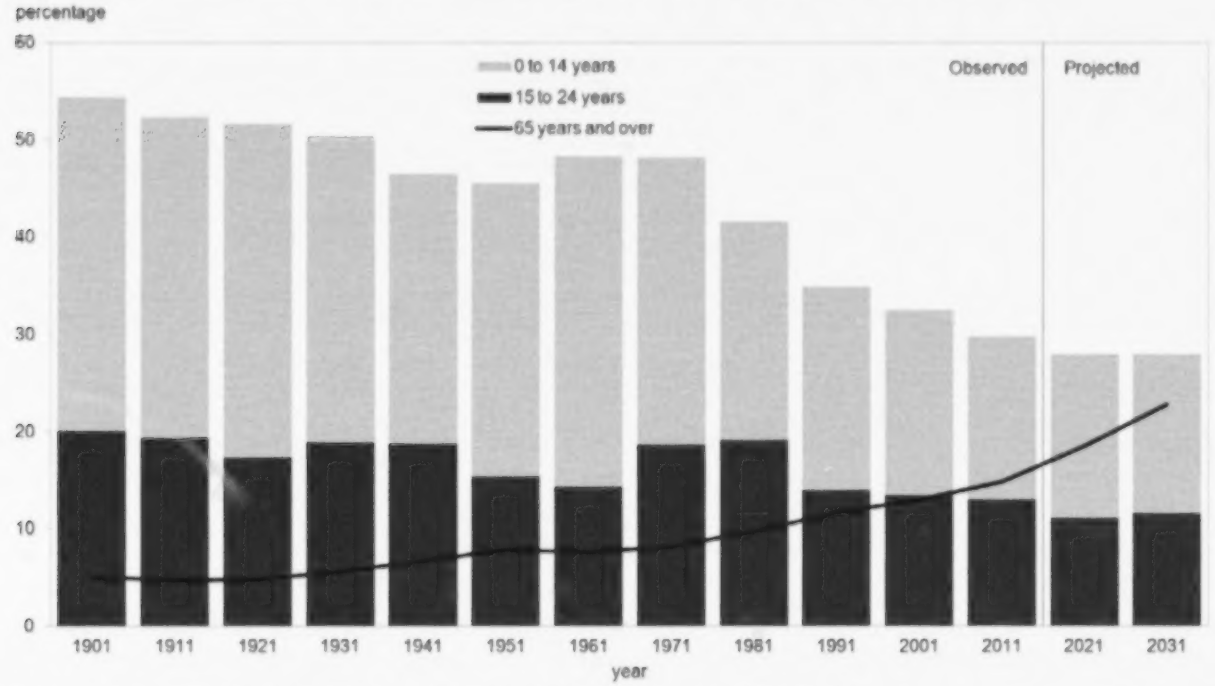
27. Greater stability of family life does not necessarily imply greater happiness or satisfaction for family members, as noted by Kevin McQuillan's concluding chapter of *Canada's Changing Families: Implications for Individuals and Society* (2006), editors K. McQuillan and Z.R. Ravanera, University of Toronto Press, pages 293 to 306.

28. Wargon, S.T. 1979. *Children in Canadian Families*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-810, Tables 2 and 18.

29. Based on data beginning in 1926. Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Vital Statistics, Births Database, 1926 to 2011, Survey 3231 and Demography Division, Population Estimates Program.

As a result, children accounted for a relatively large share of the total Canadian population during the baby-boom years compared to the immediately preceding decades (Figure 3). In 1961, individuals aged 24 and under comprised close to half (48.3%) of Canada's population, and over one-third (34.0%) of the population was aged 14 and under.

Figure 3
Proportion (in percentage) of the population aged 0 to 14, 15 to 24 and 65 and over, Canada, 1901 to 2031



Note(s): Projection based on the 2006 year and according to the medium growth (M1) scenario.

Source(s): 1901 to 2011: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1901 to 2011. 2021 and 2031: Statistics Canada. 2010. *Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories, 2009 to 2036*, catalogue no. 91-520-X.

The relatively strong influx of children into the Canadian population during the baby-boom period, paired with a strong economy, resulted in a shift in infrastructure development towards the needs of this generation. This focus evolved as the baby-boom cohort aged, from the construction of primary schools in their childhood years to universities, suburbs and jobs in their young adult years.

Post-baby boom to the end of the 20th Century

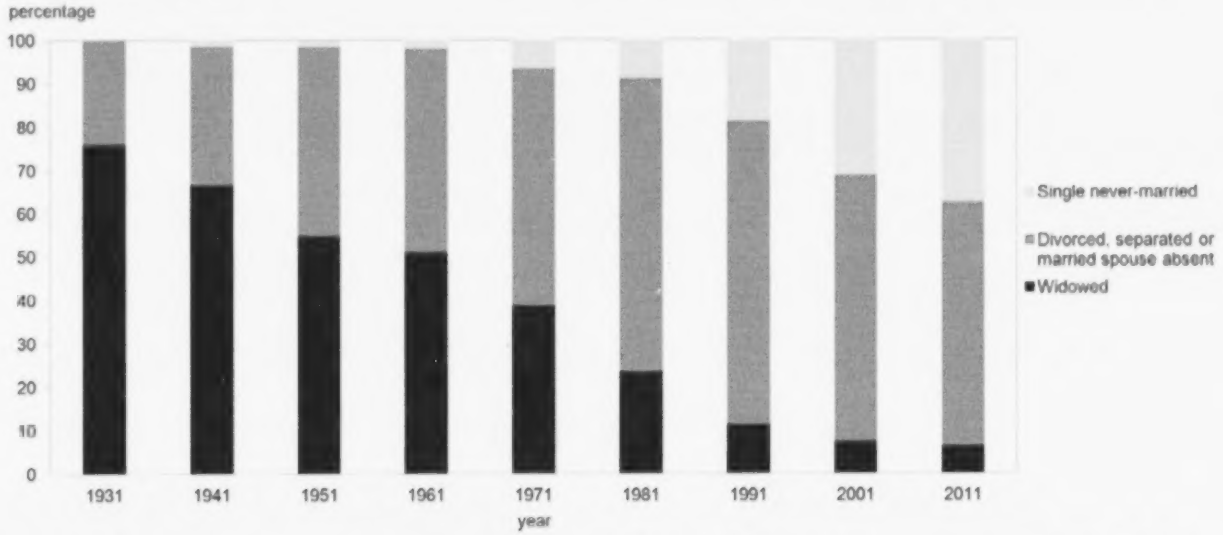
1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011

By the end of the 1960s, events such as the legalization of the birth control pill as well as the growing participation of women in higher education and in the paid labour force occurred. The declining influence of religion also affected family life. In Quebec in particular, this increased secularization, which occurred in conjunction with other societal and cultural changes, has become known as the Quiet Revolution. Together, these events contributed to later family formation, smaller family sizes and an increased diversity of family structures compared to the preceding baby-boom period. As the 'dual-earner' model of paid work became more prevalent among couples, parental work arrangements and the time available to spend with family changed markedly from preceding decades.[30]

Additionally, there was a large increase in the number of divorces following the 1968 *Divorce Act*, which introduced no-fault divorce based on separation of three years or more. Previously, divorce was a relatively uncommon path to lone parenthood. A second large increase in divorces occurred in the late 1980s following the amendment to this legislation that reduced the minimum separation time to one year.[31]

Reflecting some of these societal changes, the share of children living with a lone parent more than doubled from 1961 (6.4%) to 1991 (15.2%). Over this period, the legal marital status of lone parents also changed considerably. In 1961, about half (51.0%) of children in lone-parent families lived with a widowed lone parent, already down from about three-quarters (75.9%) in 1931. Thirty years later, widowed lone parents were the exception, representing about one in ten (11.2%) children in lone-parent families in 1991 (Figure 4). Instead, the majority of children in lone-parent families, 70.0%, lived with a parent who was divorced, separated or married (spouse absent) in 1991; another 18.8% lived with a lone parent whose marital status was single never-married.[32]

Figure 4
Distribution (in percentage) of children aged 24 and under in lone-parent families by marital status of the parent, Canada, 1931 to 2011



Note(s): Data for single never-married status of lone parents was not published in 1931. Historical comparisons for children living in census families, particularly in lone-parent families, must be interpreted with caution due to conceptual changes over time. For more information, see Appendix.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1931 to 2011.

30. Lapierre-Adamcyk, E., N. Marcil-Gratton et C. Le Bourdais. 2006. "A Balancing Act: Parents' Work Arrangements and Family Time", *Canada's Changing Families: Implications for Individuals and Society*, editors K. McQuillan and Z. R. Ravanera, University of Toronto Press, pages 49 to 75.

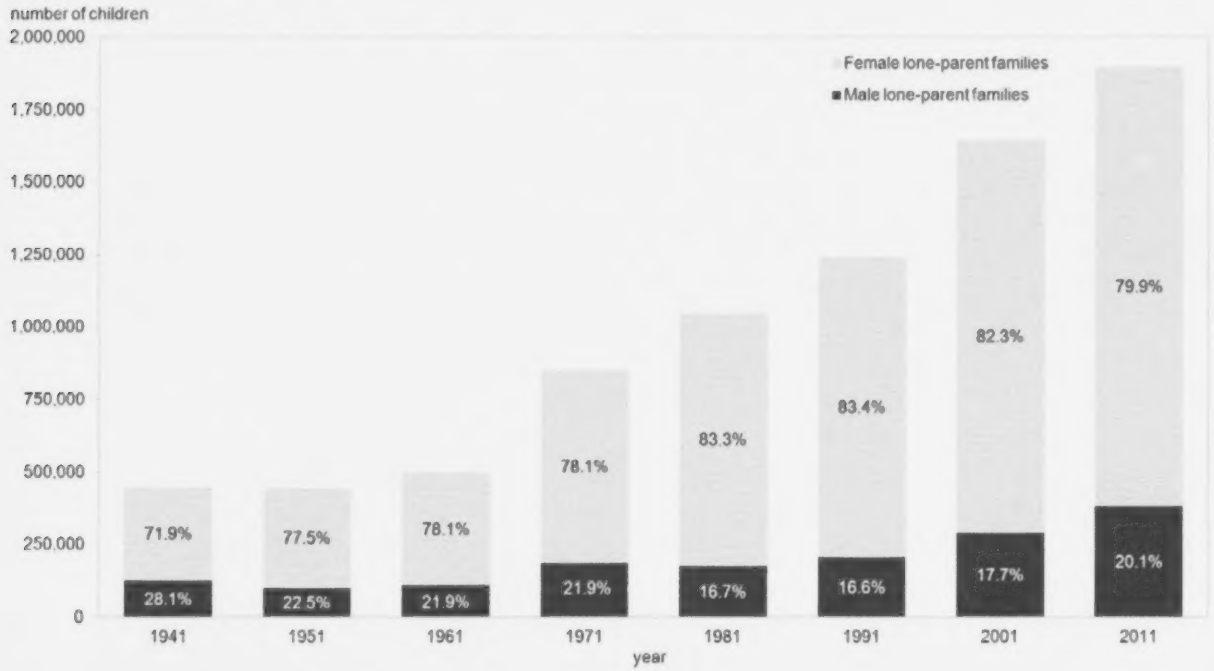
31. Milan, A. 2013. "Marital status: Overview, 2011", *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-209-X.

32. Single never-married status includes those lone parents that have separated from a previous common-law partner.

Along with the marital status of lone parents, the predominance of female lone parents has varied considerably over time. While lone parents have always been more likely to be female, in the early decades of the 20th century, relatively high maternal mortality contributed to proportionally more male lone parents being enumerated compared to later in the century (Figure 5). By the 1990s, among children in lone-parent families, the proportion that were living with a male lone parent reached its lowest observed level: 15.5% lived with a male lone parent in 1996, compared with 28.1% in 1941.

Figure 5

Number of children aged 24 and under living in lone-parent families and the distribution (in percentage) of these children by sex of the parent, Canada, 1941 to 2011



Note(s): Historical comparisons for children living in census families, particularly in lone-parent families, must be interpreted with caution due to conceptual changes over time. For more information, see Appendix.

Source(s): 1941 to 1971: Wargon, S.T. 1979. *Children in Canadian Families*, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 98-810, Table 17. 1981 to 2011: Statistics Canada, censuses of population.

In addition to the increased share of lone-parent families, children's living arrangements appeared to become more diverse when common-law couples were first measured in the 1981 Census. In some cases, individuals choose to live in a common-law relationship as a precursor to, or 'testing ground', for eventual marriage. Increasingly however, common-law unions have become a more permanent alternative form of cohabitation for many couples—whether they have been previously married or not—and one in which children may be raised. Between 1981 and 1991, the proportion of children living with common-law couple parents more than doubled, from 2.6% to 5.9%. Despite their increased prevalence, common-law unions in Canada remain more likely to dissolve than married unions, and there is some evidence that children living with common-law parents during this time experienced a higher risk of family dissolution, and at a younger age, than those born into a union of married parents.[33]

33. Marcil-Gratton, N. 1998. *Growing up with Mom and Dad? The intricate family life courses of Canadian children*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-566-XIE. Marcil-Gratton, N. and C. Le Bourdais. 1999. *Custody, access and child support: Findings from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth*, Research Report Child Support Team CSR-1999-3E, Ottawa, Department of Justice. Bohnert, N. 2011. "Examining the determinants of union dissolution among married and common-law unions in Canada", *Canadian Studies in Population*, volume 38 (3-4), pages 91 to 109.

The 21st century to date

1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011

The current century has witnessed a continuation of many societal changes begun in the preceding one, which in turn have influenced the living arrangements of children and young adults. Among these continuing family-related patterns is a longer transition to adulthood for many young people, as evidenced by the trends of delayed union formation, older ages at childbearing, and a higher tendency to remain in, or return to, the parental home (Box 4).[34]

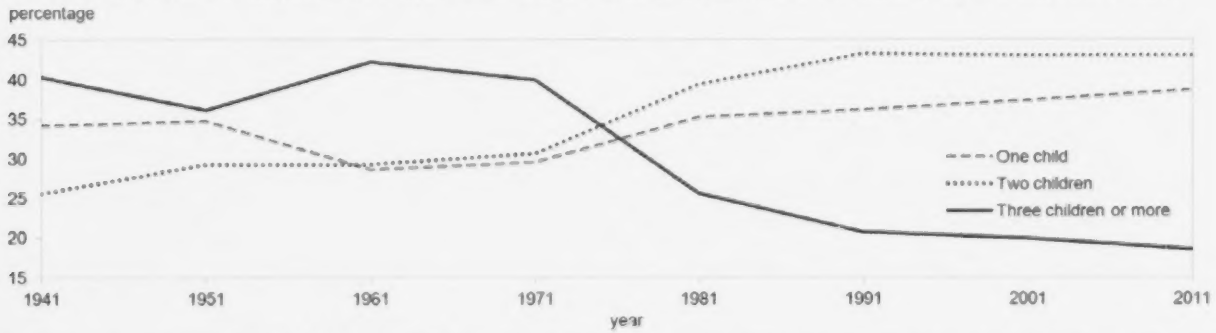
While the majority of children (64.9%) continue to live with married parents, the shares living with common-law parents or a lone parent have grown. Between 1981 and 2011, the proportion of children who were living with common-law parents grew more than five times, from 2.6% in 1981 to 13.7% in 2011. This trend was particularly prevalent in the province of Quebec and Nunavut territory, where 31.6% and 32.6% of children lived with common-law parents in 2011, respectively. Yet, for Canada as a whole, there were still proportionally more children living with a lone parent (21.5%) than with common-law parents. Indeed, the share of children living with a lone parent in 2011 is the highest ever recorded, and more than triple that observed at the height of the baby boom (6.4% in 1961).

The characteristics of lone parents have also continued to evolve. In the decades since 1981, shared custody of children following the breakup of a union has become more common. Reflecting this trend, the proportion of children in lone-parent families living with a male lone parent has reversed its formerly declining trend, increasing from 15.5% in 1996 to 20.1% in 2011.[35] While the majority of children in lone-parent families now live with a parent who is divorced, separated or married (spouse absent), the share who live with a single never-married parent has more than quadrupled over the past 30 years, from 9.0% in 1981 to 37.4% in 2011.[36]

Social, cultural and economic changes following the baby boom resulted in a decline in the average number of children per family, and in turn, the number of siblings with whom children tend to grow up. The total fertility rate was 1.61 children per woman in 2011, less than half that observed at the peak of the baby boom (3.94 children per woman in 1959).[37] Along with this trend came a sizeable reduction in the average household size, from 3.9 persons in 1961 to 2.5 persons in 2011.[38] In 1961, families with children were most likely to have three or more children at home (42.2%). By 2011, this was the case for less than 2 in 10 families with children (18.5%) while it was more likely that families had two children (42.9%) or one child (38.6%) at home (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Distribution (in percentage) of families with children aged 24 and under by number of children, Canada, 1941 to 2011



Note(s): For years 1941 to 1971, the numerator is "all children aged 24 and under" and the denominator is "families with all children aged 24 and under". For the years 1981 to 2011, the numerator is "children in families with at least one child aged 24 and under" and the denominator is "families with at least one child aged 24 and under". Historical comparisons for census families must be interpreted with caution due to conceptual changes in 2001. For more information, see Appendix.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1941 to 2011.

34. For more information, see Clark, W. 2007. "Delayed transitions of young adults", *Canadian Social Trends*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-008.
35. Less sole custody awarded to mothers following divorce and more joint custody increases the chance of a father having custody of a child on Census Day. As measured by the census, lone-parent families may not fully capture the complexity of children's living arrangements and custodial circumstances.
36. This increase is in small part due to a concept change in 2001 regarding census families. For more information, see Appendix.
37. Milan, A. 2013. "Fertility: Overview, 2009 to 2011", *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-209-X.
38. 2011 Census of Population and Wargon, S.T. 1979. *Canadian Households and Families*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97-753, Table 2.1.A.

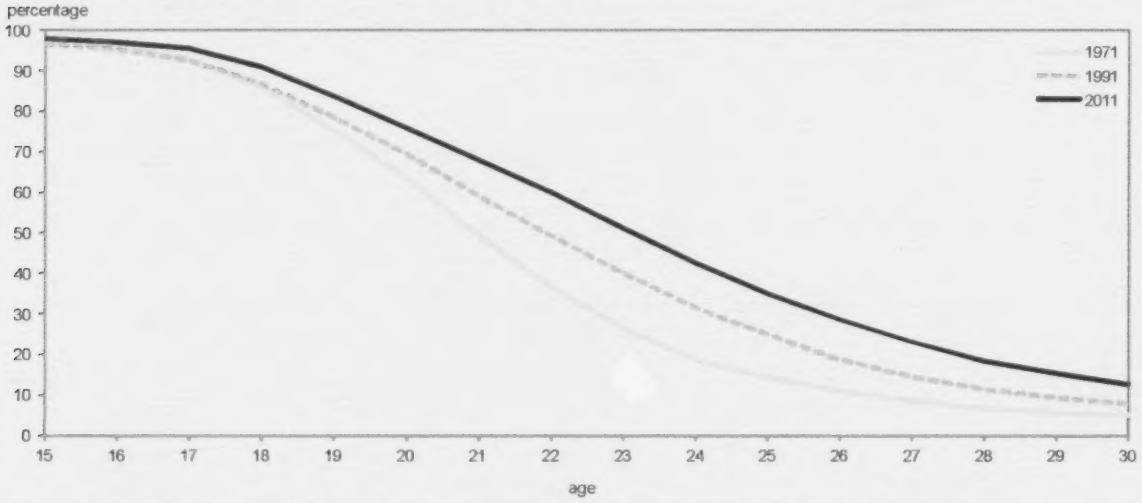
Box 4

Adult children in the parental home: An enduring phenomenon

Generally, the share of individuals who remain as children in their parental home decreases with age. However, there has been a clear delay in children leaving the parental home to establish their own households over the last 40 years. From 1971 to 2011, the largest proportional increases in 'children' occurred among those in their late twenties. For example, the share of 27 year-olds who were living as children in census families increased from 8.6% in 1971 to 23.0% in 2011 (see Figure B2).

Figure B2

Proportion (in percentage) of the population aged 15 to 30 in private households living as children in census families, by single year of age, Canada, 1971, 1991 and 2011



Note(s): Historical comparisons for children living in census families must be interpreted with caution due to conceptual changes over time. For more information, see Appendix.

Source(s): 1971: Ram, B. 1990. *Current Demographic Analysis: New Trends in the Family*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-535E, Table 5.4. 1991 and 2001: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1991 and 2011.

Is this a new phenomenon? The 1937 manuscript *Dependency of Youth: A Study Based on the Census of 1931 and Supplementary Data*[1] provides an interesting perspective. It documents the increasing average age of youth 'independence' (meaning no longer attending school) from age 16 in 1911 to age 18 in 1931:

> "Delayed independence creates problems in the home, in the community, and in the lives of the individual boys and girls....Some increase in the average length of schooling during recent decades has undoubtedly been permissible...but the tendency to keep the young people in the ordinary schools as boys and girls can hardly be allowed to go on indefinitely, as it seems inclined to do."[2]

continues...

As a result of smaller family sizes, individuals aged 24 and under represent a relatively small proportion of the total population—29.8% in 2011—and increasing focus is being placed on the constantly-growing senior population. It is estimated that the number of people aged 65 and over could surpass the number aged 14 and under by 2021. By 2036, people aged 24 and under could represent 27.5% of the total Canadian population, about half of their share in 1901 (54.3%) and just slightly above the projected proportion of seniors (23.7%).[39]

39. Projection based on the 2006 Census and according to the medium-growth (M1) scenario. Source: *Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories 2009 to 2036*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-520-X.

Box 4 (continued)

A growing increase in the prevalence of young adults in their twenties living in the parental home was predicted at that time:

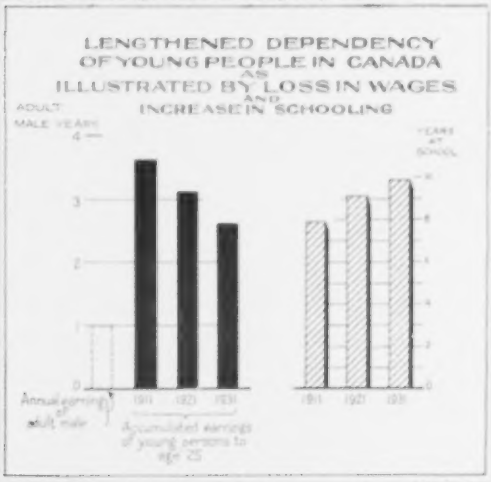
> "As the age of leaving school becomes higher and higher, it represents a more and more serious problem. We have seen that independence is not reached until young people are well on into their nineteenth year, and if the tendency of the last generation continues, they will in comparatively few years still be dependent on parents when reaching their twenties."[3]

The conditions described in 1931 echo the experiences of many modern-day families with older children:

> "[a]nd in addition to those staying in school is the further larger number who have fallen into idleness between school and their first job, or by reason of having made a mistaken or unfortunate start in employment."[4]

Figure B3

Figure from a 1931 Census monograph examining the increasing "dependency of youth"



Source(s): Robbins, J.E. 1937. *Dependency of Youth: A Study Based on the Census of 1931 and Supplementary Data*, 1931 Census, monograph no. 9, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-1931CM-9.

The topic of young adults living in the parental home still generates interest 75 years later. By 2011, over 4 in 10 (42.3%) young adults aged 20 to 29 lived in the parental home, including close to 6 in 10 20- to 24-year-olds (59.3%) and a quarter of 25- to 29-year-olds (25.2%).[5] Young adults in the new millennium may live with their parents as a source of emotional or financial support, among other reasons.

1. Robbins, J.E. 1937. *Dependency of Youth: A Study Based on the Census of 1931 and Supplementary Data*,1931 Census monograph no. 9, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-1931CM-9.
2. Robbins. 1937, page 54.
3. Robbins. 1937, page 54.
4. Robbins. 1937, page 54.
5. Milan, A. and N. Bohnert. 2012. "Living arrangements of young adults aged 20 to 29", *Census in Brief*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-312-X-2011003. The measurement of young adults in the parental home in this *Census in Brief* refers to those based on economic family status. This is different than the number of children in census families, who, based on the census definition, have no spouse, partner or children of their own in the same household.

Reflecting the trends of delayed childbearing and the aging of the population, many couples in the new millennium do not have children at home, either because they have never had children or because their children have grown and moved out of the parental home. The 2006 Census marked the first time that there were more couples without children aged 24 and under (42.7% of all census families) than couples with children aged 24 and under (41.4%), a pattern that continued in 2011.[40] Moreover, for the first time, in 2011 there were proportionally more one-person households (27.6%) than households comprised of couples with children (26.5%).[41]

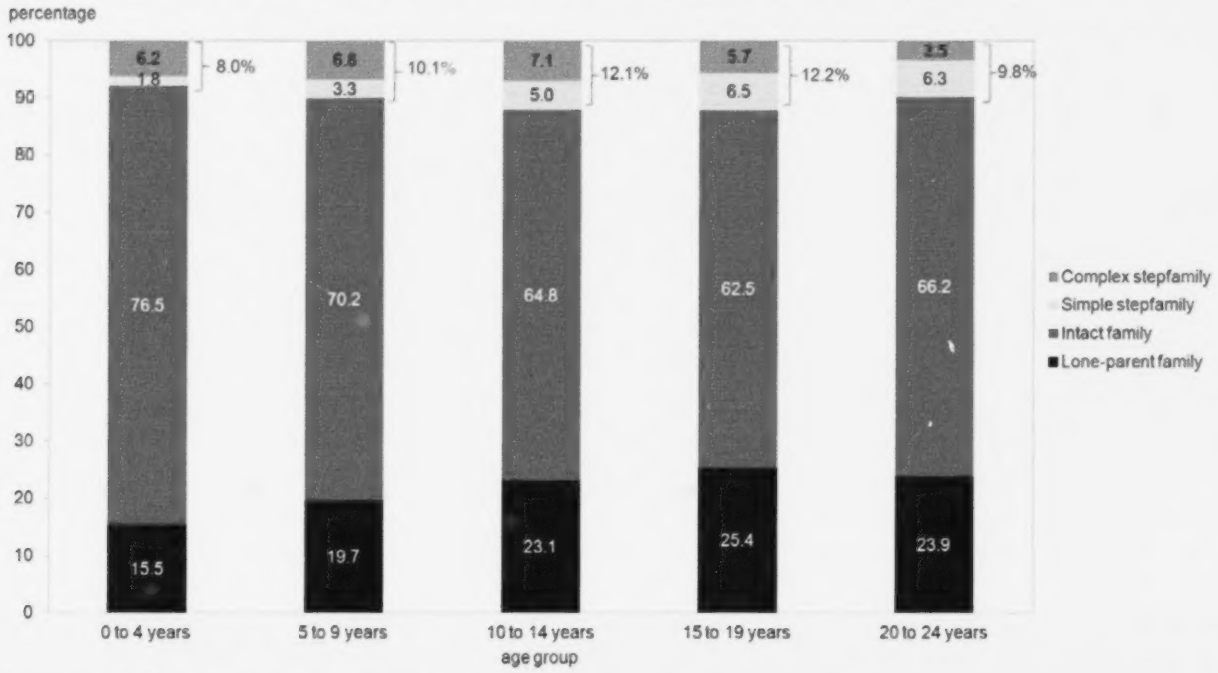
The 21st century has to date seen a growing societal recognition of other family forms, as evidenced by the legalization of same-sex marriage across Canada in 2005. Beginning in 2001, children living with two parents could be distinguished as living with either opposite-sex or same-sex parents in the census.[42] Of the 8.8 million children aged 24 and under who lived with two parents in 2011, the majority (99.9%) lived with opposite-sex parents while the remaining

40. Milan, A. and N. Bohnert. 2012. *Portrait of Families and Living Arrangements in Canada*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 93-312-X-2011001.
41. Milan, A. and N. Bohnert. 2012. "Canadian households in 2011: Type and growth", *Census in Brief*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-312-X-2011003.
42. Data on same-sex common-law couple families was made available in 2001, while in 2006 this was expanded to include same-sex married couple families following legislative changes in 2005.

9,600 children lived with same-sex parents. While relatively small, this number is more than double that observed in 2001 (4,600). More than four times as many children lived with female same-sex parents (7,700) in 2011 as with male same-sex parents (1,900), while the number living with same-sex married parents was slightly less than those living with same-sex common-law parents (4,000 and 5,500, respectively).

As seen earlier, diverse family structures such as stepfamilies have always been present to some degree, although it was not until 2011 that information on their precise characteristics became available in the census. Beginning in 2011, children living with two parents could be classified as living in either an intact family or a stepfamily. Most commonly, children lived with two parents in an intact family—a couple family in which all children are the biological and/or adopted children of both members of the couple. However, 929,600 children, or 10.5% of all children, lived in stepfamilies in 2011—couple families in which at least one child is the biological or adopted child of only one married spouse or common-law partner. Figure 7 shows that the proportion of children who lived in stepfamilies in 2011 varied with age, being highest for those aged 10 to 14 and 15 to 19 (12.1% and 12.2%, respectively) and lowest for those aged 0 to 4 (8.0%).

Figure 7
Distribution (in percentage) of children living in selected family structures by age group, Canada, 2011



Source(s): Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011.

Stepfamilies can be further distinguished as simple or complex (see Appendix for details). Of all age groups, children aged 15 to 19 were the most likely to live in a simple stepfamily (6.5%) in 2011, meaning that all of the children in the family were the biological or adopted children of only one married spouse or common-law partner in the couple. Children aged 10 to 14 were the most likely of any age group to live in a complex stepfamily (7.1%), meaning that they lived with at least one half sibling or stepsibling.

Children in stepfamilies, as well as their parents, may be considered "pioneers exploring unchartered territory in the world of family relationships"[43] given that there is greater uncertainty in the roles and responsibilities of stepfamily

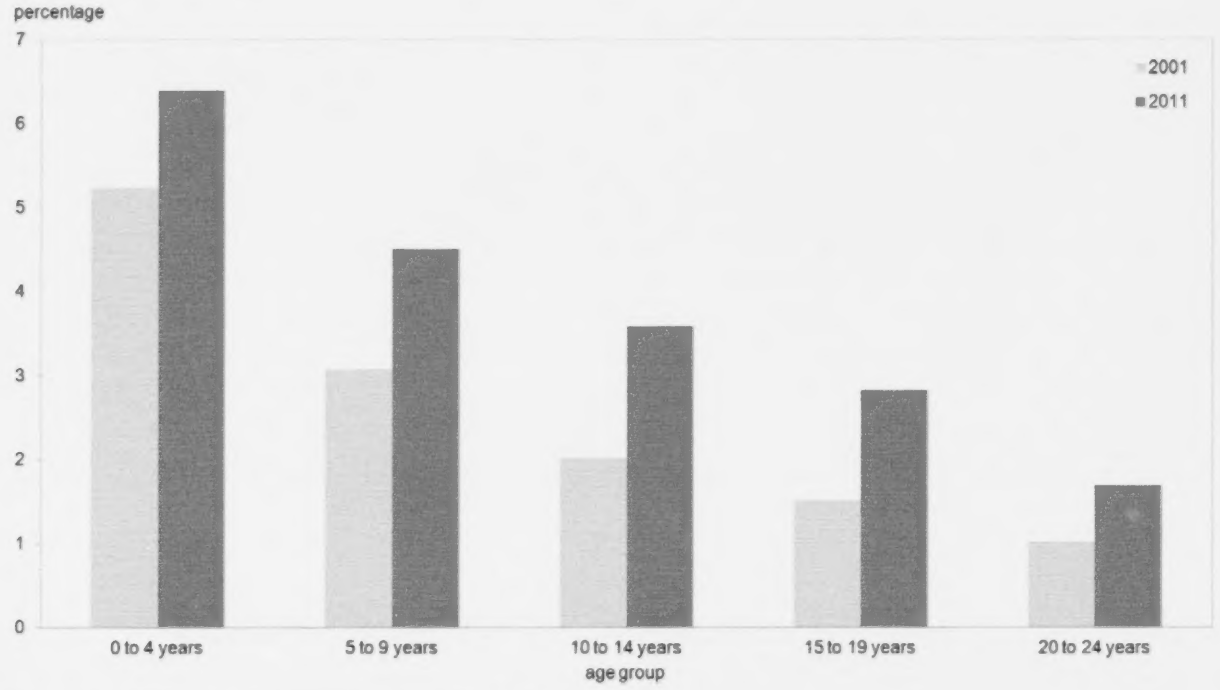
43. Juby, H. 2003/2004. "Yours, Mine, and Ours: New Boundaries for the Modern Stepfamily", *Transition*, The Vanier Institute of the Family.

members. While for many children, having stepparents and/or stepsiblings may be a positive experience, there is some evidence that children raised in stepfamilies, as well as those raised by lone parents, experience disadvantaged socio-economic outcomes compared to children raised in intact families.[44]

The previous examination of the early 20th century showed that many children lived with a grandparent for some period of time who was, in some cases, the sole guardian of the child and in others one of several extended family members present in the household. A century later, information on children living with grandparents once again became available in the census. In 2011, 366,800 children aged 24 and under lived in homes containing at least one grandparent, either with or without their parent(s) present.This represented 3.7% of all children in this age group, up from 2.5% a decade earlier.This trend has occurred alongside an increase in the proportion of multiple-family households, which may partly reflect changing economic circumstances and/or cultural preferences of families and family members, among other possible reasons.[45] The proportion of children in homes with at least one grandparent in 2011 generally was highest among very young children, representing the situation of 6.4% of children aged 0 to 4 in 2011 compared to 1.7% of those aged 20 to 24 (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Proportion (in percentage) of the population aged 24 and under in a home containing at least one grandparent by age group, Canada, 2001 and 2011



Source(s): Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2011.

As these more detailed and varied concepts of family structure continue to be measured, future censuses will reveal how the relative prevalence of children living in same-sex couple families, stepfamilies and multi-generational families will evolve over time. Combined with the trends regarding married, common-law and lone-parent families, the new millennium to date has been a time of considerable growth in the diveristy—and measurement—of children's living arrangements.

44. Kerr, D. and R. Beaujot. 2003. "Family relations, low income and child outcomes; a comparison of Canadian children in intact, step and lone-parent families", *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, volume 43(1), pages 134 to 152.

45. Milan, A. and N. Bohnert. 2012. "Canadian households in 2011: Type and growth", *Census in Brief*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-312-X-2011003.

Conclusion

In the early decades of the 20th century, changes in the living arrangements of children were mostly a result of unforeseeable circumstances such as the death of a parent or other family members. The structure of children's households was quite fluid and flexible, at times involving individuals outside of the child's immediate family. Children were sometimes fostered, temporarily or otherwise, by grandparents, aunts, uncles and family friends when resources were strained or opportunities for education or earnings were presented.

By the middle of the 20th century, various societal changes which resulted in the baby boom also lessened the diversity of children's living arrangements, with the vast majority of children being raised by married parents and with a large number of siblings. The latter half of the 20th century saw a return to greater diversity of children's living arrangements and smaller families, although, unlike earlier in the century, this was mostly due to the choices of parents (to divorce or separate, or to bear less children, to bear children within a common-law relationship or outside of a relationship) and less often the result of uncontrollable circumstances.

To date in the 21st century, the census has incorporated several expansions of the concept of family, reflecting the growing societal recognition of the diversity of children's lives. Stepfamilies, same-sex couple families and multigenerational households are examples of some of the varied family structures in which children live today.

This broad look back at children's living arrangements in Canada shows that their experiences in family life have been affected by social and cultural changes occurring for the nation as a whole. What has remained constant is the fact that families have never been uniform; rather, families and the situations of children have always been characterized by diversity to some degree. Furthermore, some phenomena that might be considered more contemporary—lone-parent families, young adults living in the parental home, grandparents living with grandchildren, for example—have in fact been present in Canada throughout the past century.

Along with its extensive time series, the scope of family-related data in the census—covering the entire population in private households—permits the examination of a variety of characteristics and living arrangements. As seen in this study, children have always been counted in the census, although the concepts and indicators related to their family circumstances have evolved over time. Using census and other data sources,[46] policies and programs directed towards families can be developed which take into account the diversity of family circumstances experienced by children in Canada. Moving further into the 21st century, demographic phenomena such as delayed union and family formation, low fertility and population aging, combined with other cultural shifts, may continue to alter the familial landscape in Canada, and specifically, the living arrangements of children. Future censuses can be used to examine the living arrangements of children and to what extent family-related trends will continue or change.

46. There are many other aspects of children's family circumstances that were either not examined at all in this study, or were only examined in a limited way, such as family income, ethnicity, religious affiliation, immigration status (including generational status), language, housing and region of residence. Census or survey data could be used to explore these topics in greater depth for various time points.

Appendix

Census definitions of family and children over time

Historically, family-related changes in the census questionnaires and to census concepts have followed societal changes.[47] Over the period examined in this document, modifications have been implemented to the definitions related to children and families (see Table A1 for a summary).

Prior to the 1941 Census, there was no consistent definition of a family, and little distinction was made between the household and family units in census publications from 1901 to 1931. In the 1871 to 1911 censuses, for example, boarders, lodgers, employees and other unrelated people were considered family members provided they were residing in the same household.[48] In 1979, the evolution of the concepts of census family and children in census families was documented as follows:[49]

> "There have been changes over the years in the definitions of 'family' and of 'children' in families in the Canadian census, and in the tabulation of statistics based on these definitions. Reasonably comparable statistics on Canadian families exist since 1941, when the 'census family' concept was introduced. By far the larger part of family data in the Canadian census is prepared and published according to this concept, which also provides reasonably comparable statistics on children 0 [to] 24 years of age, living at home."[50]

Table A1
Census family membership as defined in the census of population,[1] 1941 to 2011

Census family	1941 to 1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
Spouse/partner (with or without children) or lone parent									
Married spouse (opposite-sex)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Married spouse (same-sex)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	√	√
Common-law partner (opposite-sex)[2]	...	...	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Common-law partner (same-sex)	...	...	...	...	...	...	√	√	√
Lone parent[3]	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Child[4]									
Never-married son or daughter who is not living with his or her own child	√[5]	√	√	√	√	√	√[5]	√[5]	√[5]
Never-married son or daughter who is living with his or her own child	√[6]	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Previously-married son or daughter who is not living with his or her own child	...	...	...	...	...	...	√[6]	√[5]	√[5]
Guardianship child[7] aged 20 years and under	√	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

1. "√" indicates membership in the corresponding census(es).
2. Opposite-sex common-law partners were included with married spouses at least since 1971. They are identifiable separately on the database since 1981, even though they were not shown separately in published tables (including those on marital status) until 1991, the year common-law status was first asked about on the census questionnaire under marital status.
3. The presence of a "lone parent" depends on the presence of a "child" as defined for that year.
4. For all census years included in this table, a child in a census family can not be currently living with a married spouse or common-law partner.
5. Includes grandchildren living with a grandparent and no parent(s) present.
6. The child of that never-married son or daughter, i.e., a grandchild in a three-generation household, is also considered to be part of the census family for the period 1941 to 1971.
7. Examples include nieces, nephews or other wards for which no pay was received by the guardian.

Source(s): 1941 to 1971 adapted from Gauthier, H. 1971. *The Census Definition of Family: 1871-1971*, Population and Housing Research Memorandum no. PH-FAM-1, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 1570E. 1976 to 2011: 2011 Census Dictionary.

47. Che-Alford, J., C. Allan and G. Butlin. 1994. *Focus on Canada: Families in Canada*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 96-307E, Prentice Hall Canada.
48. Gauthier, H. 1971. *The Census Definition of Family: 1871-1971*, Population and Housing Research Memorandum no. PH-FAM-1, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 1570E.
49. Wargon, S.T. 1979. *Children in Canadian Families*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-810.
50. Wargon, 1979, pages 11 to 12.

"The census family definition used in the Canadian census since 1941 defines a family as generally consisting of "[...] a husband and wife (with or without children who have never married, regardless of age), or a lone parent, regardless of marital status, with one or more children (who have never married, regardless of age) living in the same dwelling".[51]

"Since 1956, the Canadian census has also prepared and published data according to the 'economic family' concept. An economic family is defined as "two or more persons resident in the same household and related by blood, marriage or adoption."[52]

"In the 1976 Census, the universe of census families was limited to families in Canadian private households only, and excluded families in collectives and in households abroad. However this change in coverage has not significantly altered the comparability of the statistics on families and children."[53]

"In the Canadian census publications from 1941 [to] 1971, children in census families were generally considered as sons and daughters of all ages who had never married and were living at home. Children who had ever been married, regardless of age, were not considered as members of their parents' family, even though living in the same dwelling. Unmarried sons and daughters, 25 years of age and over, living at home on the census date were considered as children in a broad sense and appeared only in a few tabulations. Most tables featuring statistics on children referred to those 0 [to] 24 years of age. Included as children also were adopted and stepchildren, foster children for whom no pay was received, as well as guardianship children or wards under 21 years of age, residing in the same dwelling."[54]

"[In the 1976 Census], a reassessment of concepts, tabulation methods, enumeration procedures and coverage led to a number of changes. These were designed to improve the quality of the statistics on families and children. The conceptual changes in particular were intended to make the statistics on children accord faithfully with the literal meaning of "children" inherent in the census concepts used. The elimination of some household members previously tabulated as children in families,[55] the procedural change in the enumeration of certain young adults away at school, and the limitation of the family and children statistics to private households in Canada only, are not considered to unduly affect the comparability of the data on children 0 [to] 24 from 1941 [to] 1976, since such changes are taken account of where necessary, that is, where they might make a significant different in the interpretation of statistics."[56]

The concept of a census family remained unchanged between 1976 and 1996. This is despite a terminology change in 1991[57] and retroactive availability of data on common-law partners and common-law couples back to 1981.[58]

51. Wargon. 1979, page 12.
52. Wargon. 1979, page 13.
53. Wargon. 1979, page 12.
54. Wargon. 1979, page 13.
55. This included the exclusion of household members, designated as children in all censuses previous to that of 1976, but where (it was shown in an unpublished 1971 evaluation report) there was not, in fact, a direct parent-child relationship as required by the census family definition. Such children were, for example, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, etc., who were under 21 years of age. Unrelated wards, foster or guardianship children whether or not pay was received by the designated guardian, were classified and tabulated in 1976 as lodgers rather than as children in families. In 1971 and all censuses dating back to 1941 they had been classified as children if no pay was received.
56. Wargon. 1979, page 14.
57. *The Census Dictionary* of 1991 states (page 124): "In previous censuses, the term 'husband-wife families' covered both the families of now-married couples and those of common-law couples."
58. The *Census Dictionary* of 1996 states (page 124): "Data on common-law couples have only been available [as a subset of all couples] since 1981."

Along with the new millennium, there came several expansions to the definition of census families, and correspondingly, the definition of children living within those families. The 2001 Census broadened and further distinguished the concept of children in census families to include the following:

- Children in a census family who were previously married (as long as they are not currently living with a married spouse or common-law partner). From 1941 to 1996, they had to be 'never married';
- Children living with two common-law parents who are of the same sex—a concept that was broadened in 2006 to include same-sex married parents;
- A grandchild living in a three-generation household whose parent (middle generation) has never married is, contrary to previous censuses, considered a child in the census family of his or her parent, provided the grandchild is not living with his or her own married spouse, common-law partner, or child. From 1976 to 1996, the census family usually consisted of the two older generations;
- A grandchild of another household member, where no middle-generation parent is present, is now considered a child in the census family of his or her grandparent, provided the grandchild is not living with his or her own spouse, common-law partner, or child. From 1976 to 1996, such a grandchild would not be considered a member of a census family.

Overall, between 1996 and 2001 there was a 1.0% increase in the number of children aged 24 and under in census families based on the new 2001 concept, while there would have been a decrease of -0.3% in the number of children during this period had the concepts remained constant. Among children aged 24 and under in lone-parent families, there was an 11.3% increase between 1996 and 2001 based on the new 2001 concept compared to an increase of 5.5% had the concept remained unchanged. Consequently, historical comparisons for census families, particularly for lone-parent families, must be interpreted with caution as a result of these conceptual changes.

Beginning with the 2011 Census, a child living with two parents could be further classified as living in either an intact family or in a stepfamily. A stepchild is defined as a child in a couple family who is the biological or adopted child of only one married spouse or common-law partner in the couple. A stepfamily is a couple census family with at least one such child.

Additionally, in 2011, a distinction could be made between those living in a simple stepfamily or a complex stepfamily.[59] A simple stepfamily refers to a couple family in which all children are the biological or adopted children of one and only one married spouse or common-law partner and whose birth or adoption preceded the current relationship. There are three types of complex stepfamilies—a couple family in which there is at least one child of both parents and at least one child of only one parent; a couple family in which there is at least one child of each parent and no children of both parents; and a couple family in which there is at least one child of both parents and at least one child of each parent.

Throughout this document, the term 'child' refers to biological or adopted children aged 24 and under living in the same dwelling as their parent(s) in private households, unless otherwise stated. Historical comparability is the main reason for the age restriction, as information on children aged 24 and under has been released for most censuses. In addition, the age restriction on children gives some sense of the dependency of a child on their parent(s).

Notably, not all individuals generally considered to be children are classified as 'children' in census families. In the 2011 Census, for example, 89.2% of the population aged 24 and under living in private households were children in census families, while the remaining 10.8% lived in other arrangements. 'Foster children', who are considered 'other relatives' in an economic family,[60] have not been considered 'children' in census families since 1976. Since 1941, the proportion of the population aged 24 and under in private households that were living outside of census families has not exceeded 20.7%.

59. For more information on stepfamilies, see the 2011 Census analytical document *Portrait of Families and Living Arrangements in Canada*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-312-X-2011001.

60. Foster children have been 'other relatives' in the economic family since 2006 even though they were not published separately until 2011. From 1976 to 1996, foster children were considered 'lodgers' in the economic family.

The term 'child' may be used in other contexts, such as young adults who live in the parental home, which is based on the economic family status definition of child, i.e., the son or daughter of the economic family reference person. These adult children may be in the parental home accompanied by a married spouse or common-law partner or children of their own.

Census definitions of living arrangements are restricted to co-residential living arrangements. Immediate family members living in separate households are not counted as part of the same census family. As is the case today, the 'snapshot' of living arrangements taken on Census Day does not fully capture the living arrangements of individuals over the course of their childhood years.